

LITERARY NEWS, VIEWS AND CRITICISM

COSMO HAMILTON TELLS WHAT HE SAW

Author's Story of How He Came to Write "The Blindness of Virtue."

ALL OF IT BASED ON FACT

Found Appreciation Mainly in This Country for the Less It Contained.

By COSMO HAMILTON.

Two reasons and they came this way. Whenever the business of life and the pressure of action where I was writing, ending their rehearsals at "The World," the famous political weekly founded by Vice-Sixty years ago, for the moment made me long for the silence of the country night. I used to go to Queen Anne house in the edge of Buckinghamshire and the up of Middlesex. In a quiet place with the gulls and gulls its lone red-tiled barns and gables below and white fountains, associations of picnics, above, its green and spread our undulating between old eight-foot walls, covered with some dignity of the green of a year, and a great tree whose green was surrounded by a curiously and heterogeneous group of bushes and bundles of wood, of ivy and ivy and tufts of moss, ivy and ivy and ivy and ivy for children and unheeded poverty for grownups. Wedged in a seat and wide within arm's length of the sofa on the one hand and the sofa on the other, a doctor's charming house, which was not only a motor car, a seat of motor car. We never regretted from the excitement or that good invigoration of us.

On either side of the screen there was a doorway with a towering chimney, scattering forth its stream of smoke. And so that men might never come from the pangs of thirst, or be forced to travel further than a few yards from their kitchens in order to secure it, there were "The King's Arms," "The Wagon and Horses," and "The Bull and Bush."

But retold as it may seem, it was green and over it wandered the militiamen's old white horse, ever impatient and giddy, always with persistent flies, lines of wagons, a gaitering torso, or two ducks unmentionable and many different families of pigeons and crows here, each with the exquisite chanticleer in pomposo enhance. Little mothers of 8 and 9 attempted to keep their smudgy-faced children of all ages upward from time months in something approaching order.

Other cottages ran to the right along a road leading to the Norman Church, whose eleven-hundred-year-old tower was not intended to allow the bells to ring and then on into the great Bath road. On fine days you would see an peasant line of leaping, shabby men, with their backs against the wall of "the George" and always wet or fine, there would be the daily procession of sturdy women and squirts going out to work in the fields, short-sighted, with their legs bound and with coarse canvas and winding wire back again at sunset. When men worked they did so in the fields or the orchards, and when they did not work they poached along the banks of the two narrow spouting streams which cut the flat lying country into curious shapes. Everywhere the pollard willow held its spangles up to the sky.

The doctor was young, practical and for widowing his practice. Did he not possess a motor car? The year as a good and earnest man with the gift of making religion an evil tasting medicine. To whom could children bring their mother's illiterate but urgent begging letters, and men come for boots and shoes the job about the place? And who was there, the doctor being practical and the vicar talkative, who would even with some sympathy to the anguish of young mothers upon whose faces the angel of death had cast a tender hand, to the middle aged woman with few teeth and dimpled face.

Ary had got into trouble with police for a bit of stealing or whose Maggie had been dismissed from her school because she had loved not as well as well? Who—but "the poor old woman things up at the 'ouse?" And in this sometimes heartbreaking and now could, but always urgent, life, came in close contact with the parents of those poor children of a father who had been placed in a life of squalor, dull, soiled, monotonous, and altogether unredeemed misery and uninspired by a note of humor. Drink was in most of the houses, dishonesty in many and a bitter discontent. Conceive the mind of different years with the same old brutal, lazy husband, the same old, unhealthy children, the lack of food, rheumatism and tooth-ache and sea from working in wet under dripping skies death an almost daily occurrence, the only excitement being the only way of obtaining temporary forgetfulness! Conceive the mind to be to keep a husband, a son and pay the rent on 15 shillings, a shilling of \$4 a week?

When there was, I, a perhaps mark for indiscriminate charlatans—how could I be able to the suffering and tragic and mistakes and weaknesses of small, scrofulous community that had been outside the walls of my house, drunken, brutality, poverty, unhygiene—there they all were, very vital and very open facts. The thing that took me daily with more and more alarm and irritation was the utterances in which mothers and school girls left the little bright faces of making them the easy prey of old and young men who prowled about the village.

And when we came to me for money to send their young daughters to maternity hospitals or for the local doctor's bill I began to argue with

M. LOTI'S FIRST VIEW OF MODERN NEW YORK

Frenchman of "Oriental Turn of Mind" Writes Down His Impressions.

them as to their horrible lack of responsibility in not having warned these poor young things of the almost inevitable consequences and to beg them to tell their oncoming girls the truth about themselves in order to save them from degradation and shame and perhaps prostitution. I was invariably met with unshaken words and looks. I might have been a crank giving utterance to poisonous doctrines. I went to the teachers, the vicar's wife and the good women who "visited" the poor. I told to young girls, "It wasn't done." It was immodest, indecent, difficult, and so on.

Going into agency, I mapped out a story, the scene of which I had in my own house. In my own village, taking several characters from life as for instance, the vicar's wife, the cook, the gardener, the woman who worked the "Albion Edward," barges on the canal, and Mary Anne, her daughter. I then conceived the character of the Rev. Harry Pemberton and showed him and his wife all alive to and intensely sympathetic with the daily problems of the village, but not to the blindness of virtue, and in order to show that the danger of ignorance is just precisely as great in the case of a highly protected, tenderly raised after birth brought up to the daughter of poor and struggling parents. I made the Pemberton's beautiful seventeen-year-old daughter as ignorant of sex as Mary Anne. Both these girls are drawn from life and both belonged not to a curiously freakish minority but to the large and overwhelming majority of young, blind, healthy girls.

I intended to do my best to throw a lamp at the feet of all the mothers and teachers and clergymen and doctors who deliberately turn their faces away from facts and to start them, if possible, into action. I may have succeeded in one or two isolated cases, especially when I turned the book into a play and it became one of the nine-day wonders of London, but the crying need of instruction to all young things of all classes in the physiology and hygiene of sex remains a matter of vital and determined indifference to every one except the members of the Society of Sanitary and Moral Propaganda in New York, Chicago and one or two other cities in this country, and to the few great and good women who have been working doggedly for years such as Miss Jane Addams and Mrs. Woodlawn Chapman.

NEW BOOK BY JOSEPH CONRAD.

Executioner's Stories Head New List of George H. Doran Company.

The George H. Doran Company are publishing a number of volumes greatly varied in subject and style:

"Twixt Land and Sea," by Joseph Conrad, stories of the Indian ocean and its islands, likely to remain long in the reader's memory; "The Story of Stephen Compton," by J. E. Patterson, a delineation of the bearing of certain moral questions upon industrial and commercial life; "The Lee Shore," by Rose Macaulay, the Hodder & Stoughton prize novel winner of the recent contest in England, and a wonderfully fastidious piece of work; "Bunch Grass," by Horace Amnesie Vachell, a series of attractive pen pictures of a California cattle ranch of thirty years ago. At the same time will be published five other works of distinction.

"The Private Life of Henry Maitland," by Morley Roberts, the story under a thin veil of disguise of the tragic career of one of the premier novelists of the English school of realism.

"Modern Problems," by Sir Oliver Lodge, a popular work in which the distinguished author has set forth with the ease and simplicity of thorough knowledge a few of the most important problems in the case of Oscar Slater; by Sir A. Conan Doyle the creator of Sherlock Holmes has applied the great detective methods to the case of a man recently condemned to death in England, whom he feels to have been wrongly convicted. "The Blindness of Virtue," by Cosmo Hamilton, is the play which has created so much interest in New York and Chicago as well as in London. It deals with the dangers of keeping young people in ignorance of the great facts of life. "The Elements of Child Study," by William Walter Smith, is a highly up to date text book on child training, designed for superintendents, teachers and officers in the Sunday school.

DINNER TO HALLIE E. RIVES.

Friends of the One Given by Washington to His Officers.

Hallie Erminie Rives, author of "The Valiants of Virginia" and a long list of other novels, has been the centre of many brilliant social affairs but none of them have been more unique than a dinner tendered her a few years ago at the Hotel Willard, in Washington, by Senator Senator Blackburn. This dinner was in honor of the publication of her novel, "Hearts Courageous."

The dinner was a facsimile of the one given by Washington to his officers after the fall of Yorktown. All the dishes of the menu were reproductions of the cuisine of Colonial days, the dinner was served on Colonial ware and the waiters were dressed in the costumes of that period. The dining room was decorated in old fashioned garden flowers and over the centre of the table hung a great floral liberty bell.

"Since my marriage," said the author recently, "I have been compelled to live on foreign shores so much that people may be inclined to think I have expatriated myself. But such is not the case, and every time I think of that Colonial dinner I get genuinely homesick. When I was writing "The Valiants of Virginia" I became so imbued with the spirit of the locality that when I laid down my pen and came back to earth again I almost cried when I found that, after all, I was in Italy and not in Virginia."

Hardy's Grandfather and the Foot-bads.

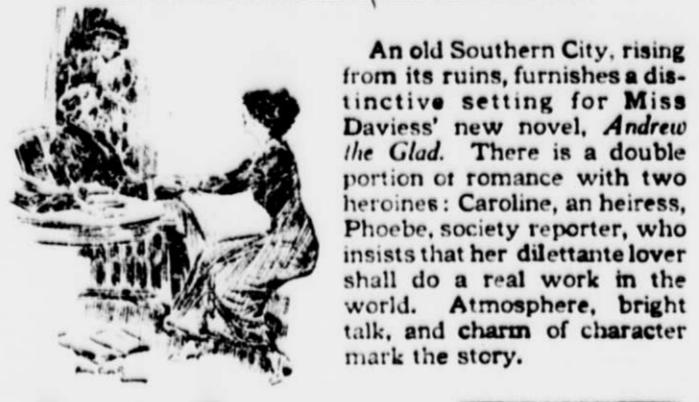
An interesting anecdote of Thomas Hardy's grandfather was told at a recent meeting of the Dorset Field Club. About a century ago in those stirring Napoleonic days of which Mr. Hardy has written in "The Trumpet Major," the old man was crossing a lonely headland midnight when he discovered that two footpads were behind him. He rolled a turf fogger onto the path, sat upon it, took off his hat, stuck two feet from his head and his hands, and, without a word, took a long walk from his pocket, pretended to read it to the light of glow worms he had picked up and placed around the brim of his hat. The footpads, on seeing this extraordinary apparition, fled in terror and presently a rumor spread in the neighborhood that the devil incarnate had been seen by witnesses ready to vouch as to place, time and details.

AN IMPORTANT NEW NOVEL

By MARIA THOMPSON DAVIESS, Author of

The Melting of Molly

For Eight Months the Best Selling Book in America



An old Southern City, rising from its ruins, furnishes a distinctive setting for Miss Daviess' new novel, *Andrew the Glad*. There is a double portion of romance with two heroines: Caroline, an heiress, Phoebe, society reporter, who insists that her dilettante lover shall do a real work in the world. Atmosphere, bright talk, and charm of character mark the story.

Andrew the Glad

By the Author of *The Melting of Molly*

357 Pages Pictures by R. M. Crosby At all Booksellers \$1.30 net

INDIANAPOLIS: THE BOBBES-MERRILL CO.: NEW YORK

BOOKS AND THEIR MAKERS.

Harper & Brothers announce that they are putting to press this week the revised two of their new books: "The Story of My Life," by Helen Keller, "The Golden Days," by L. M. Higginson, and "Crosses and Stars," by Arnold Bennett. They are also reprinting "Woodrow Wilson's History of the American People," and "Zane Grey's 'Riders of the Purple Sage.'

Little Brown & Company report that Harper & Brothers has given a fitting finishing touch to their publications. Three bindings are announced of two others of their January novels, "Just a Breath," by Payne Erinside, and "The Little Show," by Peter Freuchen.

Nine novels announced by this house include "The Hidden Man," a reissue with a new cover, by Dorothy Canfield, "The Adventures of a Woman," by John Galsworthy, "The Merchant of Venice," by Oscar Wilde, "The Italian Girl," by Arthur Dow, professor in Columbia University.

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Three novels by Richard Price, author of "The Shepherd," lead the list for February 1. The first, "The Way of the Cross," is a tale of the crucifixion of Jesus, which will be serially narrated in the "Daily Mirror" and "Evening Standard," and will be published in three parts.

At the same instant two women reporters, Americans, make their appearance with footfalls stamped to their sides. They have an air of intelligence and keenness, their manners are gracious, they are well bred. I ask them to sit down beside me and one of them apologetic for her traveling dress. She says that she has just returned from the Orient, where she has been hunting tigers. And the interrogatory goes on.

Very well written, on this point M. Price left no judgment and asks to be excused in referring to the "Daily Mirror" and "Evening Standard," which will be serially narrated in the "Daily Mirror" and "Evening Standard."

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